

Southwest Local School District, OH



How one district used MAP Growth in high school to launch systemic change

There are many great stories of schools and districts effectively using MAP® Growth™ data to change the trajectory of student learning—but the stories don't often begin in high school. That's why Southwest Local School District in Ohio and their incredible growth are so unique. How did they start with an effective intervention at the high school level and then expand their MAP Growth data use across all students and grade levels?

Enter assistant superintendent Corinne Hayes, who has been part of the district for 22 years. After teaching French for 16 years, Hayes became assistant principal of the high school in 2013. That happened to be the same year that Southwest Local implemented a new assessment—MAP Growth from NWEA®.

Opening eyes with data

"I've always been a data girl," Hayes recounts. "The MAP Growth reports really opened my eyes to some school-wide issues. Even though I had worked in the building for 16 years, I never had any idea we had these problems." The main issue was literacy. She observed students who were significantly below grade level with an evident need for increased intervention, and noted that it was impacting their graduation rate. "I was very concerned about these kids moving forward—especially since this was high school. What was the next step going to be for these students?"

Her district leadership at the time wanted proof before investing money in different programming. "I turned to

MAP Growth," Hayes says. "I presented six data points and said, 'Here's your proof. We've got a group of students who are significantly below where they need to be. And I'm concerned that they're not going to make it to graduation.'" The district leadership was convinced and approved a new intervention program for kids who were at risk. "We put a legitimate RTI program into place—and we never had one before," Hayes says.

Expanding data use

From there, Hayes knew there was more the district could learn based on examining their data. After the district realized success in targeting individual students for intervention, administrators wanted to find out more about what was happening at the classroom level. "Our second year, we turned to MAP Growth data to help drive instructional practices," Hayes says. "The first year, we realized there was an issue. The second year we really dug in to see what exactly that issue was."

As Hayes notes, they specifically wanted to see what could be done for all kids: "Not just those who were in the bottom 20 percent, but what could we do for all kids to make their experience in high school a successful one." Their plan started with identifying a goal-setting process. They focused on reading and math and worked with ninth- and tenth-grade teachers in teams to create a goal-setting routine. In addition, they stayed flexible and tweaked their goals as they got more experience with MAP Growth. "Our focus became student growth overall," Hayes says. "And our kids started growing at an unusual rate."

Later, upon a recommendation from one of the high school teachers, they started incorporating ACT® correlations into goals for their high school students. Hayes noticed RIT scores going up because students wanted to hit their ACT-correlated goal. “We wanted to improve college readiness,” she says. “And when students saw that they weren’t meeting the goal to be ‘college ready,’ they wanted to take more ownership of their growth and improve to meet the benchmark.”

“MAP Growth has allowed us to personalize instruction more than any other tool I’ve seen.”

Corinne Hayes, Assistant Superintendent
Southwest Local School District, OH

Changing the mindset

Hayes explains that they had to adjust as they learned: “There were things that we put into place at the beginning that were very reactionary—and that we changed.” At the outset, Southwest Local implemented MAP Growth because the teacher evaluation system began to require a growth measure. “That first year, the teachers’ mindset was, ‘We are doing this because it’s an evaluative tool,’” Hayes explains.

To change the focus, Hayes began training educators across the district on using the reports. “We had to change the mindset about MAP Growth and use it as it is intended—as a growth measure for students,” she says. Digging into data, using it for instructional decisions, and focusing on the impact on student learning were instrumental in changing the outlook. “Everything that was done after that initial year was done with teacher input,” Hayes says, “Teachers really took ownership of the process.”

Teacher Sheila Reynolds explains how their use of MAP Growth evolved: “At first, it was utilized to focus on areas of weakness in learning. As we developed, MAP Growth data was used to identify strengths and weaknesses to assist in setting goals for students.”

Escalating growth

With teacher buy-in and great results across grade levels, Hayes expands the district’s data use each year. Using the MAP Growth learning continuum statements and the NWEA study linking MAP Growth scores to Ohio state test scores, she created a resource for teachers featuring learning statements for each of the five performance levels used in Ohio. Teachers can see specifically how to move groups of students from one level up to the next; she calls this their “elevator strategy.” The tactic has achieved great results. Hayes says, “Not just with a handful of students, but we have been able to move whole groups of students within each performance level up to the next level, and in some cases, even up multiple levels.”

Hayes credits all the educators in Southwest Local School District for the amazing growth. “Our staff has fully embraced MAP Growth. It helps to support our mission, which is academic and social growth for all students every day.”



District Snapshot

HARRISON, OH



PRE-K-12TH GRADE STUDENTS

4,000

PRODUCT USE

IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH IN

2013

IMPLEMENTED MAP SKILLS IN

2016

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